

Newsletter

June - July 2008 Edition

“To continually enhance the professional and business practices in community pharmacy to deliver optimal health outcomes.”

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SERVICE QUALITY FOR QCPP

Sometimes, quality management systems are viewed as a burden to be dealt with rather than a way to improve and add value to a business.

Although it's a challenge to embed quality thinking into business operations, community pharmacy appears to have taken up the challenge and many pharmacists have added value to their businesses. The 2005 QCP program evaluation has shown that accredited community pharmacies:

- have greater customer satisfaction and customer loyalty than non accredited pharmacies;
- outperform non-accredited pharmacies in areas shown to improve health outcomes; and
- are significantly different to non-accredited pharmacies in the area of competitive business strategy.

The pharmacies that have made the most of QCPP and improved customer outcomes and business profitability have more than likely done so by not treating quality management as an annual, one-off task. Instead they have embedded systems for ongoing improvement into every part of their business. They have seen the value of trained staff and good systems and the way these actions flow to customer loyalty, staff satisfaction and an improved bottom line.

Businesses that are recognized as providing high quality service also focus on customers. Community pharmacy is recognised for its excellent customer service but the formula for generating this success is usually intuitive, guided by individual business acumen and by the use of systems and processes of a marketing group.

How does a customer choose a pharmacy and how do they define service quality in a pharmacy? Customers expect all pharmacists to be competent, honest, credible trustworthy - all attributes of the caring professions. Beyond that, they expect technical quality and are largely influenced by service quality or the quality related to the “customer experience”. Service quality includes:

- responsiveness or willingness to help customers (including timely service provision),
- feeling the pharmacist and staff understand their specific needs;
- how the pharmacy looks and feels;
- interactions with staff.

Technical quality or reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. For example, dispensing the right drug to the right person or storing medicines in the right way.

Pharmacy has developed some very efficient processes supported by information technology to provide prompt service. However,

pharmacies that have taken the step beyond quality assurance to quality management will know, how many staff are needed on days with greater prescription volumes, so that the timeliness, accuracy and comprehensiveness of this service are not compromised. They will have systems that monitor and improve their businesses and will have the answers to questions such as:

- What is my prescription error rate?
- What sort of errors are made?
- Are errors due to interruptions or the way stock is arranged etc?
- How many customers do staff discuss aspects of medicines use with?
- What is my level of repeat business and why do I lose customers?

Pharmacies that practice quality management will then use information to continually assess and change the way they do business to achieve benefits for staff, customers and their business viability. In today's business environment, competitive advantage can be gained by understanding and meeting customer expectations. Quality is meeting those expectations. I encourage you, if you haven't already done so, to use QCPP as the vehicle to take your community pharmacy to an even better service level.

Jenny Bergin
Director, Quality Care Pharmacy Program

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SOME HELPFUL TIPS FROM TAS

It's hard to believe that it's been two years already since the introduction of the 2nd edition QCPP! Because the new 2nd edition rules mandate an external assessment every two years, instead of three, the first pharmacies to be 'reaccredited' under the new Standards have been assessed over the last few months.

One of the first was Campbell Town Pharmacy in Tasmania. Recently we spoke to the pharmacist in charge, Emily Long, to ask her about reaccreditation and she had some very helpful advice to those who may be anxiously anticipating the next assessment.



“I'll admit that when I first came back to the QCPP manual I had to remind myself to breathe. However I quickly realised that we had everything we needed, and it was just a question of bringing it together” she said. “If you get your implementation right the first time, QCPP really does become part of your every day business. Once the processes are in place you don't even think about the fact that it's a QCPP procedure.”

When a pharmacy has just implemented the 2nd edition and is being assessed for the first time, an Assessor will be looking to make sure that the pharmacy has developed the necessary policies and checklists required by the Standards.

The focus of reaccreditation has a subtle but key difference. The second assessment of the 2nd edition is about looking for evidence that the procedures and checklists put in place have been used, where appropriate, over the previous two years. Additionally it's about making sure they remain relevant and have been updated where required. It's more like a 'check up' appointment at your GP. Things are in place and working, but you just want to make sure they stay that way.

Emily had some wise words on where to begin. “My advice to other pharmacists is to start by thinking about what's changed since the last accreditation such as training or professional services. We are a small team, so we found



The Campbell Town Pharmacy team from left to right: Ivy Sia (Pharmacy Student, 4th year- Uni of TAS), Rana Williams and Pharmacist Emily Long. Not pictured: Staff member Kim Ryan

it helpful to come together and just talk about whether things were being done differently. Then there's just the 'simple' task of retrieving evidence of your last 2 year's work!”

Some people might think it strange for such a small, and perhaps out of the way pharmacy, to be leading the way in quality assurance. We asked Emily why she and the team are so committed to the QCPP.

“I think it's so important for our pharmacy to be accredited as the achievement is recognised Australia-wide. We are a small pharmacy in a rural part of the country. Having the QCPP accreditation sticker on our front window means the many tourists passing through can see that our standards are just as high as their local pharmacy. I think this helps to make them feel much more comfortable coming to us.

Also I've worked in several pharmacies and I think the QCPP makes it so much easier to learn how they operate. In the past I have taken home operation manuals to read because you can become familiar with a new store very quickly this way.” she said.

One of the key principals of quality assurance systems, and therefore the QCPP, is the concept of continuous quality improvement. To see real results, a pharmacy team must invest time to regularly review the way they operate, with the aim of improving systems and making the business more efficient.

Emily has exactly the right attitude when she says, “The QCPP is really just a documentation of all the professional standards that good pharmacies put into place. I think it provides an excellent base on which to build.”

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STANDARDS

By Peter Reeves

National Manager Assessments

Standard 1 - Compliance with Legal and Professional Obligations

What is the Standard?

Standard One is simply stated, “There are systems to ensure pharmacies comply with their legal and professional obligations.” Although this should be one of the simplest standards to comply with, it probably causes more delays in the issue of accreditation certificates than any of the other standards.

This is because of the mandatory action that the T1A form is completed and sent to the QCPP office. Many pharmacies forget to send in the annual declaration form that they comply with this standard. This causes delay, particularly in the receipt of the Quality Maintenance Allowance. The QMA cannot be paid until this form is received by the Quality Care Division. In most cases the actions required by Standard One, are done as a matter of routine.

Each of the action requirements in this standard is either a legal or professional requirement. That means they should be done, whether the pharmacy is QCPP accredited or not.

The philosophy of the QCPP is, “it is beyond our scope to police the variety of sometimes conflicting legislation that applies to

pharmacies”. We also don't see it as being within our scope to explicitly define how pharmacists retain their professional competency. However, to ensure that a Quality Management System is in place, we use the Pharmacist's declaration as necessary evidence that the system complies with the standard.

For legislation requirements, it's up to the pharmacies to keep informed about relevant regulations and then meet them. The same applies for the registration with the State Pharmacy Board or other relevant registering authority. For QCPP, we want the pharmacy to check that they comply with the requirements and then sign the T1A form declaring that they have done this check.

For the maintenance of professional requirements, the Pharmacist needs to have access to the right tools, and needs to confirm that the professional services they provide are performed to a professional and consistent standard. It is easy for us to confirm that they have the reference books, but each Pharmacist needs to individually confirm that they meet the required standards. They do this by working question-by-question through the PSA checklist. Again, all QCPP requires is that the pharmacist confirms that the checklist is done annually by all the pharmacists in the business and then signs the T1A to give us evidence that the standard has been met.

Professional indemnity and workers compensation insurance

is confirmed the same way as for access to the professional standards. The Assessor needs to sight the certificates of currency. It might be a good idea for the Pharmacist to request the certificate of currency when the premiums are paid. Where the evidence is obvious and simple to produce, Assessors need to sight it, otherwise the program depends upon the Pharmacist to sign the declaration form that the action has been taken.

What is the importance of this Standard to a Pharmacy's business?

Two questions arise from this process. The first is, what about pharmacies that sign the declaration without taking the action? The second is, if it's a legal requirement, why does QCPP need to be involved?

Pharmacists that sign the declaration without taking the actions required for the legal requirements are leaving the business exposed to actions by regulatory bodies to force them to comply with mandatory requirements. If they don't comply the business will suffer.

When the pharmacists don't take the necessary actions for the competency issues, they are behaving unprofessionally and bring themselves and the profession into disrepute. When this occurs, if the Assessor is aware of the problem, accreditation may be denied. It is however, really up to the profession's registration bodies to ensure that all Licensed Pharmacists maintain their ability to do the work to the required standard.

More than any of the other standards, Standard One relies on the Pharmacist to take responsibility for the quality of their business. Under the current arrangements, QCPP must accept the Pharmacist's declaration that they have taken the necessary actions.

What does the Assessor look for?

To comply with this standard the objective evidence needed by the Assessor will be:

- ✓ The signed T1A form completed annually and sent to the QCPP office.
- ✓ Copies of the professional services standards. These may be either in hard copy or electronic copies. If relying on access to copies on the internet, the pharmacy should have a shortcut on the computer that brings up the standards without needing to do a detailed search.
- ✓ The certificates of currency for each of the insurances needed by the business. These certificates can be obtained from the insurance company shortly before the assessment.
- ✓ Signed undertakings by all staff to comply with the confidentiality policy.
- ✓ The pharmacy's confidentiality policy.

MEET THE MANAGERS



Meryl Kane
NSW QCPP State Manager

QCPP State Managers are your first point of contact if you require implementation assistance. They provide implementation assistance, including advice on developing procedures and policies for your pharmacy's operation manual. They can also help to answer questions relating to the 2nd Edition standards to prepare for your assessment.

Additional resources have been provided to all states to help you with the transition from 1st to

2nd edition QCPP. This includes conducting workshops, on site visits and increased phone support. There has never been a better time to get help to become accredited.

In this edition we meet Meryl Kane the QCPP State Manager from NSW.

How long have you been in Pharmacy?

Longer than I want to admit! I started working in a pharmacy as a casual assistant during my last year of school then through the years I was doing my pharmacy degree. I did my registration year at Royal North Shore Hospital pharmacy department then moved into industry and over the years continued back in Community Pharmacy.

How long have you been with the QCPP?

I attended one of the workshops at which QCPP was released! I moved

over to the Guild (from the PSA) in 2001 as QCPP was really getting going, and have stayed with QCPP since then.

What ways are you and your team most helpful?

We help guide the pharmacy to produce an effective Operations Manual (that can be used for staff training and guiding the pharmacy's operations) and to implement QCPP in the most straight forward way possible. All our staff in NSW have worked in a pharmacy so we understand the issues pharmacies are facing. We have already run workshops around the state and will run more small-group workshops or in-pharmacy training. And we can often just help by briefing staff or answering questions over the phone.

What benefits of QCPP accreditation have you seen in NSW pharmacies?

Over the nearly 20 years that I have been visiting pharmacies in NSW, I have seen a significant improvement in their presentation and organisation. I think that QCPP has helped pharmacies improve their compliance with IR and OH&S requirements as they are clearly set out with guides to appropriate policies and procedures. Also, as pharmacies move more into services in addition to product supply, QCPP help standardise those services and ensures their quality for the consumer.

What do you enjoy about being a QCPP State Manager?

I really like helping pharmacies and have many friends in pharmacy. I am passionate about QCPP as I believe that it provides a structure that is a real help in the management of the overall business.

QCPP STATE MANAGERS CONTACT INFORMATION

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Sally Cameron 02 6270 1870	Meryl Kane 02 9467 7120	Vicki Hulands 08 8982 1024	Sally Dickinson 07 3831 3788	Gillian Starr 08 8304 8300	Sally Davis 03 6220 2955	Robert Huddle 03 9810 9999	Cathie Marshall 07 3831 3788



Quality Care Pharmacy Program

An initiative of The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

How can we help you?

Call your Guild Branch to contact a QCPP State Manager or call the administration helpline
1300 363 340

website: www.qcpp.com
email: help@qcpp.com



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